

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 and 10-43 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 10-13, 15, 16, 22, 24, 27-29 and 31 have been amended. Claim 9 has been canceled. Favorable reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

I. OBJECTION TO DRAWINGS

Figs. 4 and 5 stand objected to as failing to include a label such as -- Prior Art --. Applicants have amended Figs. 4 and 5 to include such label. Applicants therefore respectfully request withdrawal of the objection.

II. CLAIM OBJECTIONS

Claims 1, 13, 22, 27, 29 and 31 stand objected to based on the informalities noted on page 2 of the Office Action.

Applicants have amended claims 1, 13, 16, 22, 24, 27-29, and 31 to change "the or each region of the first set" and "the or each of the second set" to recite --each region of the first set-- and --each of the second set--, respectively, as suggested by the Examiner.

Claim 24 has been amended to delete "when dependent on claim 8" so as to address the lack of clarity pointed out by the Examiner.

III. REJECTION OF CLAIM 15 UNDER 35 USC §112, 2nd ¶

Claim 15 stands rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The Examiner indicates that the term “reorientable” is unclear and can appear to have either of two meanings from the specification.

Applicants have amended claim 15 to recite --the output polariser (7) is [reorientable for] flipped by 180° in the alternative mode so as to transmit light having a polarisation direction substantially orthogonal to the first polarisation direction--, as suggested by the Examiner.

Support for such amendment to claim 15 can be found, for example, in Fig. 8 and paragraph [0076] of the published application.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

IV. REJECTIONS OF CLAIMS 1-43 UNDER 35 USC §102/§103

Claims 1-43 are pending in the present Office Action. Claim 1 is the only independent claim.

- (a) *Claims 1, 2, 4, and 5 are rejected as being anticipated by May et al.*
- (b) *Claims 1, 2, 4, and 5 are rejected as being anticipated by Yamazaki et al.*
- (c) *Claims 1-5, 9-15, 17, 18, and 32-43 are rejected as being anticipated by Nishiguchi.*
- (d) *Claims 1-16 are rejected as being obvious over Jung, in view of May et al.*
- (e) *Claims 16 and 19-31 are rejected as being obvious over Nishiguchi, in view of May et al.*

Applicants have amended claim 1 to incorporate the subject matter of claim 9. Consequently, rejections (a), (b) and (e) are rendered moot. Applicants will now address rejections (c) and (d) particularly to the extent the rejections applied to original claim 9. Specifically, applicants respectfully submit that neither Nishiguchi, Jung nor

May et al. teach or suggest the features of claim 1 as amended to incorporate the features of original claim 9.

Claims 10-12 and 22 are amended for consistency of claim language.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite the features of claim 9 whereby the polarisation modifying element (5) comprises a patterned retarder and the output polariser (7) is arranged to transmit the same proportions of slow and fast axis components of light from the first and second sets of regions (8,9). For example, the present application describes such situation where "the output polariser 7 may be arranged to pass equal proportions of the fast and slow axis components from each of the regions 8 and 9 so that the output light has a uniform wavefront" (See, e.g., paragraph [0071] of published application).

i. Nishiguchi

Contrary to the Examiner's assertions, applicants respectfully submit that Nishiguchi does not seem to disclose this feature. Although Nishiguchi discloses slow (or fast) axes of quarter wave plates 106b and 106c (please see, e.g., col. 16, lines 1-29 of Nishiguchi), Nishiguchi appears silent on the feature of "a patterned retarder and the output polariser (7) ... arranged to transmit the same proportions of slow and fast axis components of light from the first and second sets of regions (8,9)" of amended claim 1. Nishiguchi also does not discuss uniform wavefront of the output light or the other features associated with the claimed invention as described in paragraph [0071] of the published application.

ii. Jung

Like Nishiguchi, although Jung discloses use of a retarder (see, e.g., Col. 5, Ins. 34-37), Jung is silent on the effect of fast (or slow) axes of the retarder, and hence does not teach or suggest arranging the output polariser and the retarder to affect the wavefronts caused by the fast and slow axes so as to produce a uniform wavefront of the output light. In fact, Jung does not appear even to mention fast or slow axes of the retarder.

iii. May et al.

May et al. does not make up for the above-discussed deficiencies in Nishiguchi and Jung.

For at least the above reasons, applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections.

V. CONCLUSION

Accordingly, all claims 1-8 and 10-43 are believed to be allowable and the application is believed to be in condition for allowance. A prompt action to such end is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner feel that a telephone interview would be helpful to facilitate favorable prosecution of the above-identified application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number provided below.

Serial No.: 10/519,264

Should a petition for an extension of time be necessary for the timely reply to the outstanding Office Action (or if such a petition has been made and an additional extension is necessary), petition is hereby made and the Commissioner is authorized to charge any fees (including additional claim fees) to Deposit Account No. 18-0988.

Respectfully submitted,

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